

# KING COUNTY KIDS' COURT

## A CHILDREN'S

# COURT AWARENESS PROGRAM

## TRAINING MANUAL AND CURRICULUM

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**THIS KING COUNTY KIDS' COURT TRAINING MANUAL** could not have been developed without the contributions and knowledge gained from an outstanding group of specialist volunteers. The following professionals contributed significantly to this manual:

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**Evelyn Brom**, *Victim Services Coordinator, Office of the Prosecuting Attorney.*

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King County has spawned a number of nationally recognized leaders in the field of children's and victim's rights. The following people have served to inspire and encourage these authors to build upon their work.

**Norm Maleng**, *King County Prosecutor.*

**Lucy Berliner**, *Director of Research, Harborview Sexual Assault Center.*

**Becky Roe**, *Director, Special Assault Unit, King County Office of the Prosecuting Attorney*

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**KING COUNTY KIDS' COURT  
TRAINING MANUAL AND CURRICULUM**

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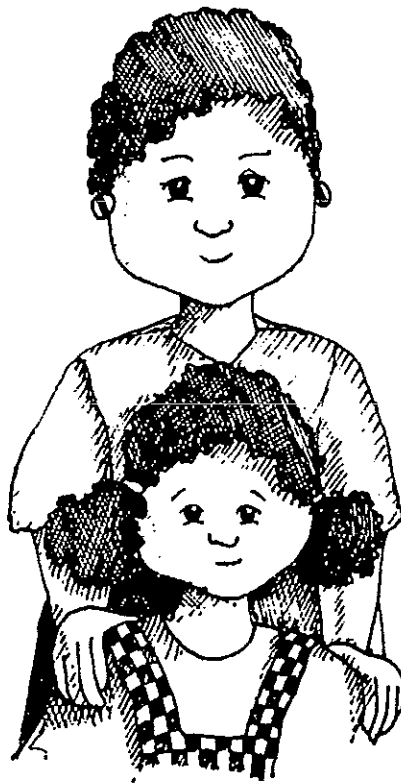
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# KING COUNTY KIDS' COURT

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## INTRODUCTION

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# INTRODUCTION TO KIDS' COURT

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COURT AWARENESS PROGRAMS have evolved in several communities over the past few years in response to the growing number of court cases involving child victim/witnesses. Typically, these cases include children involved in allegations of physical or sexual abuse, or neglect, or children who have witnessed a violent crime.

**More cases of child sexual abuse are now being reported in the United States than in the past.**

As more of these cases are reported, more investigations and filings in criminal and juvenile court follow. This has compelled a more critical examination of how court systems deal with child victim/witnesses. The result has been an acknowledgment of the systems' shortcomings and the development of programs to improve the criminal justice response.

**The courts are beginning to be more responsive to advocacy groups and efforts to create a more supportive response to children.**

In recent years, a great deal has been learned from child abuse professionals about the effects of victimization and the process of recovery. Among these findings are:

1. When a victim is responded to initially with *support and sensitivity*, that response can contribute substantially to the recovery process.
2. Besides the actual abuse experience, the child and family may experience the system as traumatic, thus impeding their recovery process.

As more children have come into contact with the criminal justice system, professionals have learned about the special needs and capabilities of these children. To assist the courts in responding more sensitively, victim advocacy groups and others have suggested innovative ways to create the kind of supportive environment that allows children to manage the challenge of appearing as a witness.

**The "court school" approach believes that once children become more familiar with court, they are much more capable of appearing as a confident witness.**

One such innovation is the "court school" concept. This approach rests on the belief that kids can learn to view the experience of going to court as less intimidating. When a child learns something about the judicial process and gains some familiarity with a courtroom, he or she is less likely to be frightened and more likely to participate fully in the process. Hence, justice can be served and the rights of all involved protected.

## INTRODUCTION TO KIDS' COURT *continued*

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In October 1989, a group of criminal justice and child abuse specialists in King County, Washington, began planning a court awareness program to help children scheduled to testify in court. With encouragement and support from King County Prosecutor Norm Maleng, the King County Kids' Court program was developed.

In the past, child witnesses were prepared for the experience on an *individual* basis. Kids' Court made it possible to help children get ready for court by participating in a supportive *group experience* held in a courthouse in an actual courtroom. This group experience serves as a powerful reminder that other children face similar circumstances and will testify in court, too.

The intention of Kids' Court is *not* to coach kids in how to testify, but simply to educate them in what it's like in court and how to relax when they have to testify.

Parents are included to help the entire family cope with going to court.

The program described in this manual emphasizes:

1. Kids understanding the courtroom process and personnel.
2. Allowing children to express their feelings.
3. Strengthening each child's ability to cope with the feelings of fear and anxiety.

Parents are included in the Kids' Court program. Parents (or guardians) attend a concurrent educational session which addresses their special needs.

### **A PERSONAL MESSAGE ABOUT THIS MANUAL**

This manual was written as a guide to setting up your own Kids' Court program. The content is based on King County's experience planning and conducting Kids' Court sessions since 1989. This program requires planning, interagency coordination, and most importantly, hours of effort from dedicated volunteers. The rewards are in helping the children gain confidence in their ability to appear in court.

The curriculum that follows is presented in a one-day format, on a Saturday. The location and time of Kids' Court in this community was determined by family schedules, travel considerations, parking availability, and safety issues. However, this curriculum can easily be adapted to meet the needs of other localities.

## INTRODUCTION TO KIDS' COURT *continued*

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### GETTING READY FOR KIDS' COURT

#### **STRUCTURE**

Kids' Court consists of concurrent sessions for younger children (ages 4-7), older children (ages 8-12), and parents/guardians.

Content for each session is outlined in this manual and includes *Objectives, Activities, Materials, and Process* and *Special Notes* to the instructor in the left-hand column. The length of time of each section is noted. The total program takes about 4½-hours, including lunch and registration.

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*Teen Court, which is a special session held on another Saturday, addresses adolescents (aged 13-17) who will be witnesses in court.*

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The ideal number of children for a Kids' Court session is a group of about 12-15. However, depending on the court calendar, more children may need to attend.

Families with trial dates approaching are notified in writing of the next King County Kids' Court session. They are asked to verify their attendance by phone. A follow-up call is made by staff during the week prior to Kids' Court to confirm attendance and answer any questions. *Please refer to the sample invitation letter in the Appendix.*

#### **STAFFING**

Originally, the King County Kids' Court program was developed and staffed totally by volunteers. As the program grew and became more institutionalized, funding support was sought through County and private sources.

At present, this program has one paid staff person: the Director. The volunteer staff consists of two groups:

- Criminal justice system professionals, educators, and social service/victim advocacy personnel.

- Community volunteers who are highly screened and trained to assist in all aspects of the program.

## INTRODUCTION TO KIDS' COURT *continued*

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### **PERSONNEL**

#### **Core Staff –**

- **Director**

*Oversees the total program. Preferably a paid position.*

- **Facilitators**

*One for each of the children's sessions, and one for the parent session. The parent facilitator should know both the criminal justice system and local resources well enough to answer questions.*

- **Instructors**

*One for the 4-7 year old children's sessions, one for the 8-12 year old children's sessions, and one for the parents' sessions. (All instructors will be involved in teaching relaxation to participants.)*

- **Judge**

*Someone who can explain the court process and the importance of the judge's role in language that children can understand.*

- **Prosecutor**

*Someone experienced enough in trial procedures to explain clearly and understandably the courtroom procedures and personnel, and who relates positively to children.*

#### **Support Staff –**

The support staff are community volunteers who carry out the following tasks:

- **Organize** and set up the courtroom areas that participants will occupy (the reception area, hallways, courtrooms, lunchroom, etc.).

- **Plan** and provide snacks and lunch.

- **Attend** to the registration desk as families arrive.

- **Escort** and serve as buddies to children (and parents) throughout the day. The number needed will depend on the size of the group.

- **Make** signs, carry supplies, clean up, and generally be available during the day for whatever needs to be done. The more hands, the more quickly and easily things get done— as long as you don't overstaff and make the participants feel overwhelmed.

## INTRODUCTION TO KIDS' COURT *continued*

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### FACILITIES AND MAJOR EQUIPMENT

- **Courthouse**  
*If possible, a real courtroom for each group of younger and older children- additional rooms as needed for parents and lunch*
- Videocassette recorder (VHS), one TV monitor
- Cassette and audiotape recorders (1 per group)
- "Life-size Dolls" depicting courtroom personnel  
*Construction patterns are available by special order*
- Registration table or desk at entrance
- Polaroid or other instant camera
- One chalkboard, whiteboard, or flipchart & pad  
*For each room used*
- Floor mats or rugs- *one for each child*
- Signs- directional and welcome- geared to kids
- Paper footprints and balloons (to guide children to their courtroom and to help make the courthouse "kid friendly")
- Kids' Court Children's Packets (Suggested contents outlined on page 11)
- Parent's Packets (Suggested contents in Appendix)
- Judge's robes (one for adult and, if possible, one child-size robe)
- Gavel, microphone, and a witness chair (in the courtroom)
- Carts to move equipment, supplies (mats, life-size dolls, materials, food, packets, etc.)
- Teaching materials as outlined in the curriculum

### SUPPLIES AND OTHER ITEMS

- Scissors, masking and transparent tape, glue, and colored marking pens
- Lunch & beverage supplies: plates, napkins, cups, tableware, table cloths (these items can be donated)
- Snacks: fruit bars, graham crackers, fruit juices, etc.
- Lunch: (deli sandwiches, chips, finger foods, drinks)
- Tissues and paper towels
- Easy access to restrooms

Other supplies will be listed in the various *Activities* sections in this manual.



## INTRODUCTION TO KIDS' COURT *continued*

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### **TIPS FOR STAFF**

A primary objective of Kids' Court is to make a positive contribution to the *self-esteem* of each participant, along with a sense of safety and respect.

Volunteer staff who facilitate, instruct, or otherwise assist during the program are encouraged to follow these guidelines.

- If a child brings up his or her own experience of abuse during a section of Kids' Court, acknowledge the child's feelings and offer your reassurance and support. However, explain to the child that this is not the time to talk about his or her specific case. If the child brings it up in the group, deal with it briefly, then remind everyone that today is not the day to talk about anyone's individual case.
- Continually build the children's confidence by sending out positive messages, such as: "I'm glad you came to Kids' Court," "That was a great response," etc. Let the children and families experience the respect you have for them.
- Model appropriate behavior. Disruptive behavior should be handled firmly, with the expectation that the child can follow the rules of Kids' Court and can participate cooperatively.
- Sometimes a child may require a break and may need to take a "time out" from the group. Assign a supportive staff member to attend to this child until the child is ready to rejoin the others.
- A decision whether a particular child can complete the day's activities attentively without disrupting the other participants may need to be made by the director in consultation with the instructors. This situation occurs very rarely.

## INTRODUCTION TO KIDS' COURT *continued*

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### **TIPS ON VOLUNTEERS AND THE DIRECTOR'S ROLE**

Volunteers are the *lifeblood* of a court awareness program.

King County Kids' Court is a *volunteer* services program. The program's success depends almost entirely on the energy, commitment, and expertise of volunteers- both generalists and specialists.

Directors of Kids' Court programs need to know all they can about volunteers- how to attract them, maintain their enthusiasm, and how to *utilize* their talents and abilities so each volunteer can make a significant contribution.

Top-level commitment is essential to success: from the agency administrator, county prosecutor, and other key decision makers.

The director needs to demonstrate the vision of a leader and the dedication of a good manager in order to run a productive program with high morale, creativity, and innovation. Some management issues that need to be examined are:

- Formulating a vision for the program.
- Setting goals, objectives, and timetables.
- Establishing policies and procedures.
- Recruiting, screening, hiring, and training staff.
- Clarifying staff roles (salaried and non-salaried).
- Establishing accountability and ongoing evaluation.
- Providing staff development training.
- Budgeting financial resources.
- Demonstrating recognition and appreciation.

The director must anticipate problems, require special training to reduce the chance of undesirable situations, provide appropriate supervision, and consult with an attorney regarding complicated legal questions.

The director must also deal with issues that any volunteer program operating within the criminal justice system faces: *confidentiality, risk management, insurance, and liability*. These legal issues and how they apply to both volunteers and paid staff should be clarified with the agency's lawyers early in the program's development.

Records and reference checks should be made on each potential volunteer. Those selected for a court awareness program must demonstrate *stability, responsibility, and long-term commitment*. Volunteers should understand, in their initial orientation, the absolute importance of maintaining client confidentiality.

Strong leadership will achieve the aim of Kids' Court: to help children feel more comfortable testifying in court.

The director's *challenge* and *joy* will be to tap into local community resources, to mobilize this wonderful energy, and to provide the administrative leadership and motivation that sustains a high level of confidence and spirit.

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**KING COUNTY  
KIDS' COURT**

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**CHILDREN'S  
CURRICULUM**

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## *Children's Agenda*

### **MORNING SESSION**

**Section I: INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES** (all children, parents/guardians together)

- |               |            |                                 |
|---------------|------------|---------------------------------|
| 9:30 - 9:45   | Activity 1 | Registration                    |
| 9:45 - 10:00  | Activity 2 | Warm-up Activity                |
| 10:00 - 10:15 | Activity 3 | Welcoming Remarks/Introductions |
| 10:15 - 10:30 | Activity 4 | Addressing Children's Feelings  |

**Section II: THE JUDGE TALKS TO KIDS** (See note below)

- |               |            |  |
|---------------|------------|--|
| 10:30 - 11:00 | Activity 1 | The Judge's Role in Court                  |
|               | Activity 2 | What if...? Judge Helps Kids Problem-Solve |
|               | Activity 3 | Children Play Judge                        |

- |               |  |  |
|---------------|--|--|
| 11:00 - 11:15 | <i>Break</i> (Time for snacks, restroom visits for all children) |  |
|               | <b>GROUPS NOW SWITCH</b>   |  |

**Section III: WHO'S WHO IN THE COURTROOM \***

- |               |            |   |
|---------------|------------|---|
| 11:15 - 11:45 | Activity 1 | Introduction to Courtroom Personnel Using Life-size Dolls |
|               | Activity 2 | Kids in the Witness Chair                                 |
|               | Activity 3 | Summary: What We Have Learned                             |

**Section IV: VIDEO OF THE COURT PROCESS** (all children and parents/guardians)

- |               |  |   |
|---------------|--|---|
| 11:45 - 12:00 | Activity 1   | A Children's Video: <i>Taking The Stand</i> |
| 12:00 - 12:30 | <i>Lunch</i> (served by volunteers to kids and parents together) |   |

### **AFTERNOON SESSION**

**Section V: "TAKING CARE OF ME"**

- |                 |            |                        |
|-----------------|------------|------------------------|
| 12:30 - 1:45    | Activity 1 | Understanding Feelings |
| (8-12 yr. olds) | Activity 2 | The Physical Channel   |
|                 | Activity 3 | The Thought Channel    |
|                 | Activity 4 | The Behavior Channel   |
|                 | Activity 5 | Poster Drawing         |
|                 | Activity 6 | Review                 |

- |                |            |                     |
|----------------|------------|---------------------|
| (4-7 yr. olds) | Activity 1 | Rest and Relaxation |
|                | Activity 2 | Building Confidence |
|                | Activity 3 | My Important Book   |
|                | Activity 4 | Relaxation Skills   |

**Section VI: GRADUATION** (all children and parents/guardians together)

1:45 - 2:00

\* During the morning while the group of 8-12 year olds meet with the Judge (Section II), the 4-7 year olds meet with the Prosecutor (Section III). After the break, the older children meet with the Prosecutor and the younger children meet with the Judge. If the group is small and of similar age, there is no need to split into the groups.

# INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

## SECTION I

**TIME: 1 HOUR**  
(For all introductory activities)

### OBJECTIVES

#### 1. CHILDREN AND PARENTS:

- Meet one another and the facilitator.
- Learn that King County Kids' Court lessens anxiety and increases comfort about going to court.
- Learn about the day's activities.

*Note to Facilitator-*

*This lesson sets the tone for Kids' Court and starts the day on a positive note.*

## ACTIVITY 1

### Registration

(15 MINUTES)

The first aim of Kids' Court is to help kids feel welcome in the courthouse as quickly as possible.

### MATERIALS

- Name tags or personal buttons.
- Kids' Court Packets which contain:
  - ♦ Zip-lock bag with colored pens ♦ Gavel-shaped pencil ♦ Paper pad ♦ Worry dolls ♦ Booklet-Do You Know You Are Very Brave? ♦ Relaxation audiotape.(Refer to Appendix for a more detailed outline of contents)

### PROCESS

*When the child and parent (or guardian) arrive at the courthouse, there are lots of feelings of apprehension. To help with this, the staff extends a warm welcome through the following:*

- 1. Greeting the child and parent with a sincere friendly welcome.*
- 2. Introducing the volunteer who serves as an escort to participants as they enter the courtroom where the sessions take place. Ideally, the escort should remain with the child until he or she feels safe.*
- 3. Directing the parents and children to where they will be seated.*

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 2

#### Warm-up Activity

(15 MINUTES)



#### MATERIALS

- Crossword puzzles
- Dot-to-Dot booklets
- Coloring books
- Colored pencils or crayons
- Conference tables and chairs

#### PROCESS

*To help the kids feel "at home" as soon as possible, get them involved right away in an enjoyable activity, such as coloring, puzzles, or dot-to-dot booklets. Use your best judgement and imagination to select activities that fit.*

### ACTIVITY 3

#### Welcoming remarks Introductions

(15 MINUTES)

This opening section of Kids' Court gives parents an opportunity to observe the interaction of their child with other children and to relieve any anxieties about safety, or about what's going to happen.

Wait for some responses; begin to get to know the children's names. Help the kids feel relaxed and welcome.

#### MATERIALS

- List of Kids' Court Rules
- List of Rights of Victim
- *Do You Know That You Are Very Brave* book

#### PROCESS

*The following script is presented to guide the person who serves as facilitator-leader for the day. Adapt the sample wording to suit the group's needs.*

"Welcome to Kids' Court. My name is ( ). I'm going to be with you today during the next four hours as one of the helpers. I'm going to assist you in understanding a few things about this courtroom.

First, I have a question to ask. Do any of you know why you are here today?

Yes, you've got some good ideas. We are here today because all of you have something in common: you're all going to court!

How many of you have seen a courtroom before, or have watched a courtroom on TV? Have any of you ever seen Judge Harry Stone on 'Night Court'? How about Judge Wapner? Or Perry Mason?"

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 4

#### Addressing Children's Feelings

(15 MINUTES)

When children recognize their feelings, they're often better able to accept them.

The children's responses to each question should be read aloud to emphasize the diversity and/or similarity of responses. There is no "right" response.

To conclude this section, summarize the results of the feeling-identification exercise. Thank them for sharing and compliment them on the good job they did.

NOW, the children and parents will separate with the children remaining and the parents moving to another room or courtroom. If there are two groups of children, 4-7 and 8-12, one group will move to another room with the Prosecutor (see next section III).

### MATERIALS

- Envelope containing the "Feeling Faces"

### PROCESS

*Refer to the sample feeling cards in the Appendix.*

"I'd like to ask some questions about how you feel about certain situations. You each have an envelope with six 'feeling face' cards. When I ask the question, choose one card that describes your feeling and hold it up for me to see. Let's begin. How do you feel about:

1. Coming to Kids Court today ....
2. Going to a real trial when you will be a witness and testify ....
3. Having to talk about what happened to you again in a courtroom in front of other people ....
4. Seeing the defendant (the person alleged to have broken the law) ....
5. Sitting on the witness stand and talking into a microphone ....
6. Answering questions the lawyers will ask you ....
7. Seeing a judge in a black robe ....
8. Getting confused or not knowing what to do ....
9. Taking an oath in court and promising to tell the truth ....
10. Being a kid in a grown-up place like court...."

### INTRODUCTION OF THE JUDGE

"Now we're ready for the next part of Kids' Court. You are about to meet a person who has a very important job to do in court. Do any of you think you know who this person is (point to the judge who will be standing there in his or her robe).

You're right. This is a judge. Just like the one who sits in this courtroom every day.

Let me introduce you to Judge ( ). I'm going to let Judge ( ) tell you about some of the important things he/she does in the courtroom to make sure there is justice and everything in court is fair."

## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 3 *continued*

Encourage responses and discussion.

The rules can be posted in bold letters in the courtroom. Have a child read the rules, then discuss them as a group.

Encourage the kids to explain or repeat the rules in their own words.

Each child is given a packet containing several items, including the booklet *Do You Know That You Are Very Brave?* A sample is included with this manual.

"Here at (King County) Kids' Court we have two special rules. The rules are easy to remember and important to follow.

1. **Telling the truth is the most important thing I must do when I come to court.**
2. **Kids' Court is where I learn about court; but my special day in court is the day I get to talk about what happened to me. Today, I *won't* have to talk about what happened to me.**

Let me see if you understand these two rules. The first rule says that telling the truth is the most important thing you must do when you come to court. What does that mean?

The second rule states that today you will learn about court, and not talk about what happened to you. You'll be able to tell what happened to you on your own special day in court. Do all of you understand? Do you have any questions about these two rules?

Now I'd like to tell you about some other rules that our state of (Washington) has about kids who have to go to court and be witnesses. These rules help to make sure that kids- like you- get treated fairly and with special courtesy in court. These rules are called the 'Rights of Child Victims and Witnesses.' Let's go over them and talk about what these rules mean.

A child victim witness- like you- gets to:

1. **Have everything said in words you can understand.**
2. **Have a safe place to wait.**
3. **Have an advocate with you.**
4. **Have your advocate tell the court about things that matter to you.**
5. **Get information about people and places to help you.**

Finally, to help you remember what we learned today, you'll be able to take home this booklet, *Do You Know That You Are Very Brave?*

Now that we've heard all these rules, let's spend a little time finding out how we're feeling right now."



## INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES

### ACTIVITY 4

#### Addressing Children's Feelings

(15 MINUTES)

When children recognize their feelings, they're often better able to accept them.

The children's responses to each question should be read aloud to emphasize the diversity and/or similarity of responses. There is no "right" response.

To conclude this section, summarize the results of the feeling-identification exercise. Thank them for sharing and compliment them on the good job they did.

NOW, the children and parents will separate with the children remaining and the parents moving to another room or courtroom. If there are two groups of children, 4-7 and 8-12, one group will move to another room with the Prosecutor (see next section III).

### MATERIALS

- Envelope containing the "Feeling Faces"

### PROCESS

*Refer to the sample feeling cards in the Appendix.*

"I'd like to ask some questions about how you feel about certain situations. You each have an envelope with six 'feeling face' cards. When I ask the question, choose one card that describes your feeling and hold it up for me to see. Let's begin. How do you feel about:

1. Coming to Kids Court today ....
2. Going to a real trial when you will be a witness and testify ....
3. Having to talk about what happened to you again in a courtroom in front of other people ....
4. Seeing the defendant (the person alleged to have broken the law) ....
5. Sitting on the witness stand and talking into a microphone ....
6. Answering questions the lawyers will ask you ....
7. Seeing a judge in a black robe ....
8. Getting confused or not knowing what to do ....
9. Taking an oath in court and promising to tell the truth ....
10. Being a kid in a grown-up place like court...."

### INTRODUCTION OF THE JUDGE

"Now we're ready for the next part of Kids' Court. You are about to meet a person who has a very important job to do in court. Do any of you think you know who this person is (point to the judge who will be standing there in his or her robe).

You're right. This is a judge. Just like the one who sits in this courtroom every day.

Let me introduce you to Judge ( ). I'm going to let Judge ( ) tell you about some of the important things he/she does in the courtroom to make sure there is justice and everything in court is fair."

## SECTION II

TIME: 30 MINUTES



### OBJECTIVES

1. CHILDREN WILL UNDERSTAND:
  - What is a trial?
  - What is the judge's role?
  - Why do judges wear robes?
  - What is the gavel for?
  - Why do witnesses take oaths?
2. CHILDREN WILL BECOME MORE COMFORTABLE WITH THE COURTROOM.

## ACTIVITY 1

### The Judge's Role in Court

Judge begins with friendly words of welcome to the kids.

### MATERIALS

- Judge's Robe
- Child-size Judge's Robe
- Courtroom Facility
- Gavel

### PROCESS

*The following is presented as a guide to the guest judge/instructor for the day. Adapt the suggested wording to suit the group's needs.*

"Before I explain my job and what it's like to be a judge, let me tell you a little about why we go to court.

We go to court when we think a serious law has been broken. In the courtroom we tell what happened. Several people usually get to tell what happened, and that includes you.

As the judge, I listen carefully to what everyone is saying to make sure they are following the rules of the court. We judges and lawyers learn these rules in law school before we can work in a courtroom. I also ask questions, and some of the people in the courtroom can ask me questions. The time we spend in the courtroom asking and answering questions is called a trial.

Today, you're going to learn about trials, courtroom procedures, and how you will fit into all this as a witness. You'll also learn who all the people are who work in the courtroom. We want you to feel comfortable on that special day when you have to come to court, so that no matter what, you will tell the truth in the courtroom."

## THE JUDGE TALKS TO KIDS

### ACTIVITY 3

#### Children Play Judge

#### MATERIALS

- Judge's robe
- Child-size Judge's robe
- Judge's bench
- Gavel
- Instant camera (such as a Polaroid) and enough film to take each child's picture  
(This activity is optional)

#### PROCESS

*At this time, the children have an opportunity to take turns putting on a judge's robe, sitting in the judge's chair, and tapping the gavel. At King County Kids' Court, we use this time to take an instant photo of the "child judge" with the participating judge. This photo is presented to the child at the end of the day during graduation.*

#### CLOSING

Judge's active role in Kids' Court is finished at this point, though an invitation to participate in graduation may be extended.

"Before I finish, I want to tell you how much I've enjoyed meeting you and talking about my job in court. You have been good listeners and you've asked good questions. I'm sure that when your special day comes, you will do just fine talking about what happened and telling the truth. Thank you for being such good students in Kids' Court."

#### **BREAK (15 minutes for snacks and bathrooms)**

Volunteers can distribute snacks and escort kids to restrooms.

### ACTIVITY 2

#### What if. . . ? The Judge Helps the Children Problem-Solve

Judge holds up the "What If" flip chart booklet and shows the first picture. Try to show on your face the emotions described. (The question and best answer are on the back of the picture.) Lead the discussion as the kids answer the questions.

*These 12 questions were adapted with permission from the Kids in Court Program, San Diego, California.*

#### MATERIALS

- Copy of the "What If" flip chart (see Appendix)

#### PROCESS

"Now, I'd like to ask you some special questions, sort of like a little quiz. Each question has several answers that may be right. You try to decide which answer is the best thing to do." *The following questions are posed.*

#### What would you do if...

1. **Someone asks you a question that you don't understand?**
  - A. Give them an answer that I think is right?
  - B. Say, "I don't understand?"
  - C. Make something up?
2. **You can't remember something?**
  - A. Say, "I don't remember?"
  - B. Guess?
  - C. Act like I didn't hear the question?
3. **You feel angry?**
  - A. Try hard to hold it in?
  - B. Turn my head so no one will see me?
  - C. Go ahead and cry- I can ask for a Kleenex, a glass of water, or a break if I want?
4. **You feel sad and start to cry?** Same choices as number 3.
5. **Someone says a word and you don't know what it means?**
  - A. Think real hard and try to figure it out?
  - B. It's only one word so it doesn't matter if I understand it or not?
  - C. Ask what the word means?
6. **You feel really tired on the witness stand?**
  - A. Keep going and hope it will end soon?
  - B. Tell myself that I am not really that tired?
  - C. Tell the judge that I need a break?
7. **The attorneys start to argue with each other?**
  - A. It's not important to me so I'll sit and wait until they're done?
  - B. I've said something wrong and I'm in trouble?
  - C. Something important is going on so pay close attention?
8. **You make a mistake in what you say?**
  - A. Don't let anyone know because I took an oath to tell the truth?
  - B. Tell the attorney or judge that I made a mistake and I meant to say something else?
  - C. Wait until it's all over and then tell someone?
9. **You get confused by what the attorney is asking you?**
  - A. Tell the attorney that the question is confusing?
  - B. I don't want to look dumb so I'll just answer the best I can?
  - C. Try to figure it out and give my best answer?
10. **You need to say a word in court that some people say is a bad word?**
  - A. Change the word so it sounds better?
  - B. It's OK to use any word that I need to use to tell about what happened to me?
  - C. Use a different word that I've heard someone say instead of the one I know?
11. **Someone in court makes a face at you or looks mean?**
  - A. Tell the judge what this person is doing?
  - B. Look the other way and ignore him/her?
  - C. Make a face back at them?
12. **You need to go to the bathroom or feel like you're going to be sick?**
  - A. Take a few deep breaths and keep going until it's over?
  - B. Try not to let it bother me?
  - C. Ask the judge to stop for a while?

## THE JUDGE TALKS TO KIDS

### ACTIVITY 3

#### Children Play Judge

#### MATERIALS

- Judge's robe
- Child-size Judge's robe
- Judge's bench
- Gavel
- Instant camera (such as a Polaroid) and enough film to take each child's picture  
(This activity is optional)

#### PROCESS

*At this time, the children have an opportunity to take turns putting on a judge's robe, sitting in the judge's chair, and tapping the gavel. At King County Kids' Court, we use this time to take an instant photo of the "child judge" with the participating judge. This photo is presented to the child at the end of the day during graduation.*

#### CLOSING

Judge's active role in Kids' Court is finished at this point, though an invitation to participate in graduation may be extended.

"Before I finish, I want to tell you how much I've enjoyed meeting you and talking about my job in court. You have been good listeners and you've asked good questions. I'm sure that when your special day comes, you will do just fine talking about what happened and telling the truth. Thank you for being such good students in Kids' Court."

#### **BREAK (15 minutes for snacks and bathrooms)**

Volunteers can distribute snacks and escort kids to restrooms.

# WHO'S WHO IN THE COURTROOM

## SECTION III

TIME: 30 MINUTES

### OBJECTIVE:

CHILDREN WILL UNDERSTAND WHO THE FOLLOWING COURT PERSONNEL ARE:

- |                        |                                      |
|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ■ Prosecutor           | ■ Bailiff                            |
| ■ Witness              | ■ Jury                               |
| ■ Defendant/respondent | ■ Advocate                           |
| ■ Defense Attorney     | ■ Sheriff or law enforcement officer |
| ■ Court reporter       | ■ Visitors                           |
| ■ Court clerk          |                                      |

## ACTIVITY 1

### Introduction of Courtroom Personnel Using Life-size Dolls

### MATERIALS

- Life-size dolls (seated in the jury box) representing courtroom personnel
- Courtroom facility
- Witness chair
- Microphone

### PROCESS

Facilitator continues.

"We're now going to meet another important person in the courtroom. This is ( *name* ). She/he is going to tell you about her job and explain the jobs of several other people in court."

Prosecutor opens with friendly remarks.

(Ask for a show of hands)

"Good morning. Let me tell you about my job. I'm called a prosecutor. Sometimes we are called lawyers or attorneys (words that mean the same thing), but our special title is prosecutor. Every day, about (55) prosecutors just like me come to work in this building. Our main job is to help kids and adults tell the judge what happened to them.

As you've already learned, this process of going to court and telling the truth about what happened to you is called a trial. We hold a trial when we think a serious law has been broken, and if there are enough facts to prove that someone did something wrong. It is important to remember that *you* are not on trial . . . the *facts* are on trial."

## WHO'S WHO IN THE COURTROOM

---

Prosecutor finishes describing a DEFENSE ATTORNEY . . .

Add other tips about what to do when you testify, as appropriate.

Ask for a volunteer.

"Sometimes you might be asked questions that are embarrassing to talk about. It's OK in the courtroom to go ahead and talk about these things. You might want to find a friendly face in the courtroom and talk directly to that person. Then, it's not quite as scary.

Now, who can help me place the defense attorney where you think he or she sits?"

---

### **COURT REPORTER**

"When court is in session, there is one very busy person whose fingers are always moving. This is the court reporter. This person types at a special machine and writes down every word spoken in the courtroom. That's why we can't just nod our head when we answer questions- there's no way to type a nod!

Ask for a volunteer.

Where does this person sit in the courtroom? Who can help me place the court reporter?"

---

### **COURT CLERK**

"Another helper in the courtroom is the court clerk. As in any office, a courtroom has lots of papers to handle. The court clerk's job is to take care of all the paperwork and to be a helper to the judge. In fact, the court clerk is the judge's best friend in the courtroom.

Ask for a volunteer.

Who can tell me where the court clerk sits?"

---

### **BAILIFF**

"The bailiff is another person with an important job in the courtroom. The bailiff is the one who answers the phone, schedules hearings and appointments for the judge, and takes care of the jury.

Ask for a volunteer.

Who can help me place the bailiff in the right chair?"

---

### **JURY**

"A jury is made up of 12 men and women who listen to what everyone in court says and then decides if a law was broken or something wrong happened. The jury listens carefully to everything said in the courtroom."

## WHO'S WHO IN THE COURTROOM

---

### **DEFENDANT or RESPONDENT**

"Now, let's see if you can remember: What do we call the person who is 'on trial'? That's right, we call the person on trial the defendant.

The reason this person is in a trial is because he/she may have done something wrong and broken the law. This person may have hurt you, or done something bad to you.

This person may not be a bad person, but what he or she did was bad, and we want to try to make sure it doesn't happen again. The defendant may be someone you know very well or someone you don't know very well at all.

The defendant stays in the courtroom for the entire trial and listens to everything that is said. The defendant usually sits quietly. You don't have to look at this person if it makes you feel upset. You can look at someone you know or look at me, the prosecutor.

Ask for responses and select a child to place the defendant doll in the right seat.

Who knows where the defendant will sit? That's right. Who wants to place the defendant in the seat?"

### **DEFENSE ATTORNEY**

"The defendant has a lawyer, too. This lawyer is called the defense attorney or defense lawyer. The defense attorney's job is to help the defendant by asking questions of the witnesses- like you. Just remember to tell the truth.

If you forget something, it's OK to say that. If you don't understand a question, it's OK to ask the attorney to repeat the question another way. Be sure to take your time and think carefully before you answer any question asked by the prosecutor or defense attorney. Answer with words like 'yes' or 'no,' or with a whole sentence.

Try not to say 'uh-huh' or just nod your head."



## WHO'S WHO IN THE COURTROOM

---

Prosecutor finishes describing a DEFENSE ATTORNEY . . .

Add other tips about what to do when you testify, as appropriate.

Ask for a volunteer.

"Sometimes you might be asked questions that are embarrassing to talk about. It's OK in the courtroom to go ahead and talk about these things. You might want to find a friendly face in the courtroom and talk directly to that person. Then, it's not quite as scary.

Now, who can help me place the defense attorney where you think he or she sits?"

---

### COURT REPORTER

"When court is in session, there is one very busy person whose fingers are always moving. This is the court reporter. This person types at a special machine and writes down every word spoken in the courtroom. That's why we can't just nod our head when we answer questions- there's no way to type a nod!

Ask for a volunteer.

Where does this person sit in the courtroom? Who can help me place the court reporter?"

---

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"Another helper in the courtroom is the court clerk. As in any office, a courtroom has lots of papers to handle. The court clerk's job is to take care of all the paper-work and to be a helper to the judge. In fact, the court clerk is the judge's best friend in the courtroom.

Ask for a volunteer.

Who can tell me where the court clerk sits?"

---

### BAILIFF

"The bailiff is another person with an important job in the courtroom. The bailiff is the one who answers the phone, schedules hearings and appointments for the judge, and takes care of the jury.

Ask for a volunteer.

Who can help me place the bailiff in the right chair?"

---

### JURY

"A jury is made up of 12 men and women who listen to what everyone in court says and then decides if a law was broken or something wrong happened. The jury listens carefully to everything said in the courtroom."

## WHO'S WHO IN THE COURTROOM

---

Prosecutor finishes  
describing the JURY...

"They listen for all the facts of a case, then go off to decide if the law has been broken. Once they decide, they tell the judge their decision: that the defendant is either guilty or not guilty."

Ask for a volunteer.

Who knows where the jury sits? Can you go and put this juror there?"

---

### **ADVOCATE**

"When you go to court, there will probably be a person in court who is there just for you. This person is called an advocate. The advocate might be your counselor or some special friend who knows what happened and is there 'on your side' to give you support."

The advocate can sit in the courtroom and is often a good person to look at if you feel nervous, or when you're answering questions. An advocate makes things better for you just by being there because this person is someone you know and can trust.

Ask for an answer.

Where is a good place for an advocate to sit?"

---

### **VISITORS**

"In courtrooms, visitors are sometimes welcome. The kind of trial most of you are involved in usually will not have visitors unless the visitors know the defendant, or you and your family. So usually the courtroom will not be filled with a lot of extra people sitting as visitors. Visitors are expected to sit quietly. They do not get to testify in the witness stand."

Ask for an answer.

Where do you think the visitors will sit?"

---

### **SHERIFF or LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICER**

"In the courtroom, you may see a uniformed officer (like a police officer) who attends the trial. This person may be a sheriff or another law enforcement officer. It's the job of the sheriff to make sure everyone is safe."

Ask for an answer.

Where do you think the sheriff should be?"

## SECTION V

**Following lunch.  
For older children.**

**TIME:**  
1 HOUR, 15 MINUTES

### OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN AGES 8 TO 12 WILL:

- Better understand and manage their fears and anxieties about going to court.
- View their courtroom experience as something to be mastered rather than as something to be avoided.
- Learn to share positive messages about themselves and their day at Kids' Court.

## ACTIVITY 1

### Understanding Feelings

The purpose of this section is to explore the concept of feelings with a focus on fear and anxiety.

The children may sit around a table as they listen to the reading.

### MATERIALS

- Short story called *Double Dip Feelings*\*
- 3-Channel visual aid
- Relaxation audiotope\*\*

### PROCESS

*Instructor begins with some friendly words about how well the children are doing in Kids' Court thus far.*

"To begin this session, we're going to listen to a short story that will help us focus on a word we hear a lot about— the word 'feelings'."

*Read the story out loud, then lead a discussion by asking these questions:*

"What are some feelings you have about going to court?"

What does 'being nervous, afraid, or anxious' mean?

What might it feel like?

What can you do about it?

Feelings such as being afraid or anxious have been studied by the experts. They have learned that there are *three ways* a person expresses fear or being afraid:

1. Physically (in our body).
2. Thoughts (what we think in our mind).
3. Behaviors (how we act)."

*\*Double-Dip Feelings, Stories to Help Children Understand Emotions, by Barbara S. Cain, MSW, Magination Press, New York, New York, 1990.*

*\*\*RELAXATION TRAINING FOR CHILDREN (script reprinted with permission) by Arlene S. Koeppen, Elementary School and Guidance Counseling, October, 1974.*

## VIDEO OF THE COURT PROCESS

### SECTION IV (Kids)

TIME: 15 MINUTES

#### OBJECTIVE:

CHILDREN AND PARENTS/GUARDIAN WILL:

- Review what they have learned during the morning session by watching a videotape on the same subject.

### ACTIVITY 1

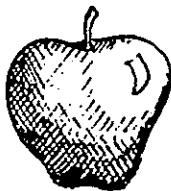
#### "Taking the Stand"—A Children's Video

Children and their parents/guardian will reconvene for this section.

Show the video after the children are prepared to watch and listen.

Here are some possible questions you might ask after watching the video.

Ask for answers from as many children as possible.



#### MATERIALS

- Videotape entitled: "Taking the Stand" \*
- A VHS video playback unit and TV monitor

#### PROCESS

"How many of you enjoy watching movies on video? Well, now you're going to see a special video made to help you learn more about being a witness in court and testifying. After you've watched the the video, we think you'll feel even more confident and comfortable about going to court.

The video is short, just 12 minutes. As soon as the video ends, we'll have time for questions.

*Review the film by asking these questions:*

1. How do you think Frankie and Laurie feel about testifying in court?
2. How do you think you'll feel about testifying?
3. What are some things you can do to make yourself feel more comfortable when it's your turn to go to court to testify?"

\*The videotape *Taking the Stand* is available from The Victim Witness Assistance Program, Thirteenth Circuit Solicitors Office in Greenville, South Carolina, at \$49.95. Call (803) 298-8612. This is one of a number of commercially produced videos which may be included in a Kids' Court program.

**Lunch: 12 noon — 12:30**

Held in an adjoining room or lounge area of the courthouse.

## SECTION V

**Following lunch.  
For older children.**

**TIME:**  
1 HOUR, 15 MINUTES

### OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN AGES 8 TO 12 WILL:

- Better understand and manage their fears and anxieties about going to court.
- View their courtroom experience as something to be mastered rather than as something to be avoided.
- Learn to share positive messages about themselves and their day at Kids' Court.

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*Read the story out loud, then lead a discussion by asking these questions:*

"What are some feelings you have about going to court?"

What does 'being nervous, afraid, or anxious' mean?

What might it feel like?

What can you do about it?

Feelings such as being afraid or anxious have been studied by the experts. They have learned that there are *three ways* a person expresses fear or being afraid:

1. Physically (in our body).
2. Thoughts (what we think in our mind).
3. Behaviors (how we act)."

*\*Double-Dip Feelings, Stories to Help Children Understand Emotions, by Barbara S. Cain, MSW, Magination Press, New York, New York, 1990.*

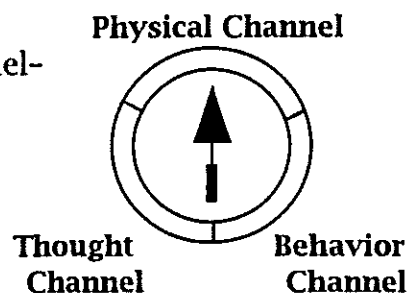
*\*\*RELAXATION TRAINING FOR CHILDREN (script reprinted with permission) by Arlene S. Koeppen, Elementary School and Guidance Counseling, October, 1974.*

### ACTIVITY 1

#### Understanding Feelings

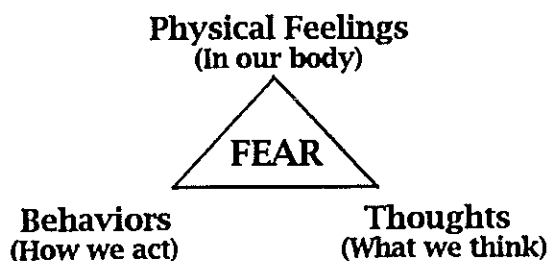
Use the 3 channel visual aid to focus on the physical channel.

"We can think of these three ways as each having a channel-like a TV. For each channel there are specific things we can do to help us feel less afraid or anxious, and we're going to learn some of those skills today."



### ACTIVITY 2

#### The Physical Channel



#### MATERIALS

- Flipchart or poster of a triangle
- Mats on the floor- one for each child

#### PROCESS

"Let's talk first about feelings in our body. Can we list what happens in our bodies when we're nervous?"

*The list should end up including some of the following.*

- breathing too fast, heart pounding, tight muscles, dizziness
- ringing in ears, turning red/blushing, shaking/weak knees

"Fear doesn't express itself to the fullest right away. Certain 'signals' may show up first, which means you're getting afraid of something. What are some of these signals you experience that tell you fear is growing?"

- dry mouth when you're asked to speak in front of a lot of people at school
- butterflies in your stomach when you have to sing a solo
- shaking hands when you're introduced to someone *really* famous or important

The good news is we can learn to manage our fears by recognizing the 'triggers' and 'signals' and stopping them before we feel out of control and so afraid we can't do anything. In the case of going to court, we'll think about what triggers we each have to being afraid, so we can stop them and do a good job on the day we have to go to court."

Write their ideas on a flipchart (or white board/chalkboard).

Brainstorm signals of approaching fear. You might prompt them with examples such as these to the right.

### **ACTIVITY 3**

#### **The Thought Channel**

Use the 3 channel visual aid to focus on the thought channel.

Permit kids to offer their own examples which may include court related fears like thinking about seeing the defendant or thinking about talking out loud in court, etc.

Introduce the concept of thought-stopping as a technique to "break up" intrusive negative thoughts.

Discuss what happened with the kids. Explain how negative, repeating thoughts can be interrupted and controlled.

#### **PROCESS**

"The thought channel is made up of thoughts that come into our brain when we're nervous or scared. Sometimes these thoughts come into our head over and over again and we just don't know how to get them to go away. Have any of you ever had an experience like this?"

*Offer an example if none are provided by the kids. For example, while walking to school for the first time you were chased by a dog. All day you couldn't think of anything else because you knew you'd have to walk home that same way. The thought of facing that barking dog again kept going over and over in your mind all day.*

"When fear gets expressed in the thought channel, we have scary thoughts that we can actually see in our mind. We imagine the worst thing is going to happen. Sometimes we even have bad dreams or nightmares that our mind uses to express fear or anxiety about something. So, how do we get rid of these troublesome thoughts in the thought channel?"

#### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

##### **■ Thought stopping**

"I'd like each of you to sit comfortably with your eyes closed and think about one of those negative thoughts -and let it go over and over in your mind. When you have the thought going over and over in your mind, raise your hand. I'm waiting for everyone to raise their hands so I know that negative thoughts are in your minds.

*Yell loudly—STOP! as you simultaneously clap your hands together.*

"Did this loud noise and yell interrupt your thoughts?"

Remember, you can stop these kinds of repeating thoughts yourself!"

## **ACTIVITY 2**

### **The Physical Channel**

Repeat the "cues" a couple of times to help the kids remain focused.

Allow time for kids to get comfortable on their mats or in their chairs.

Encourage the kids to use the tape at home during quiet times to help relax muscles when tension is present. Remember the cues!

"Let your mind think about about a peaceful, happy time you had in the past- something like your last birthday party or when you did something really fun with your friends or family, or going to the beach or camping, or anything that was happy and peaceful.

Think about how it felt then. With your *eyes closed*, remember what were the sounds, the smells, the sights? Think about how calm and relaxed you felt. Continue to think of this until I begin counting. (*Be quiet a moment.*)

I will now begin counting backward from five to one. When I say 'one' you can open your eyes and be back here at Kids' Court. Five, four, three, two, one.

Now we've learned how to respond to the *feelings* of fear in the *physical channel* (like our heart pounding or our hands shaking) by controlling our breathing and thinking pleasant thoughts. You now have the first skills you need to relax when you feel afraid."

### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

- Progressive muscle relaxation (refer to script in Appendix)

"We're going to learn another skill to help manage those feelings we get in our body, the physical channel. This skill will help with those feelings of tight muscles and tension. We call this **muscle relaxation**." *Play audio tape.*

Spread out and get comfortable. Let's review the muscle groups.

#### **Muscle Groups**

Hands and arms  
Arms and shoulders  
Shoulder and neck  
Jaw  
Face and nose  
Stomach  
Legs and feet

#### **Props**

Lemon  
Cat  
Turtle  
Jaw breaker  
Fly  
Elephant/Fence  
Mud puddle"

*Practice on each group of muscles using verbal cues from the instructor. The instructor must be familiar with the tape in order to introduce each technique. Use props to help the children focus. Once all the muscle groups have been reviewed and the corresponding tightening and relaxing techniques practiced, play the audio tape.*



### **ACTIVITY 3**

#### **The Thought Channel**

Use the 3 channel visual aid to focus on the thought channel.

Permit kids to offer their own examples which may include court related fears like thinking about seeing the defendant or thinking about talking out loud in court, etc.

Introduce the concept of thought-stopping as a technique to "break up" intrusive negative thoughts.

Discuss what happened with the kids. Explain how negative, repeating thoughts can be interrupted and controlled.

#### **PROCESS**

"The thought channel is made up of thoughts that come into our brain when we're nervous or scared. Sometimes these thoughts come into our head over and over again and we just don't know how to get them to go away. Have any of you ever had an experience like this?"

*Offer an example if none are provided by the kids. For example, while walking to school for the first time you were chased by a dog. All day you couldn't think of anything else because you knew you'd have to walk home that same way. The thought of facing that barking dog again kept going over and over in your mind all day.*

"When fear gets expressed in the thought channel, we have scary thoughts that we can actually see in our mind. We imagine the worst thing is going to happen. Sometimes we even have bad dreams or nightmares that our mind uses to express fear or anxiety about something. So, how do we get rid of these troublesome thoughts in the thought channel?"

#### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT**

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"I'd like each of you to sit comfortably with your eyes closed and think about one of those negative thoughts -and let it go over and over in your mind. When you have the thought going over and over in your mind, raise your hand. I'm waiting for everyone to raise their hands so I know that negative thoughts are in your minds.

*Yell loudly—STOP! as you simultaneously clap your hands together.*

"Did this loud noise and yell interrupt your thoughts?"

Remember, you can stop these kinds of repeating thoughts yourself!"

### **ACTIVITY 3**

#### **The Thought Channel**

Develop and use visuals to help kids picture how they can infuse a thought-stopping device in their mind to interrupt negative, scary thinking.

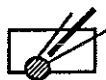
"Let's practice now with each of you yelling STOP! in your own mind (**not** out loud), when you want to stop the thoughts that are in your head. Besides silently yelling STOP, there are some other ways to interrupt thoughts.



- Think of a bolt of lightning zapping your thoughts.



- Visualize a big red stop sign in your mind.



- Picture a meteor crashing the thoughts away."

*Practice this two times. Encourage deep breathing and muscle relaxation to be paired with the thought-stopping. These skills work best when practiced together.*

### **ACTIVITY 4**

#### **The Behavior Channel**

Use the 3-channel visual aid to focus on the behavior channel.

#### **PROCESS**

"Now let's talk about the last channel that expresses fear—the behavior channel.

This channel is concerned with how we act or behave when we're scared or frightened. Sometimes we 'psyche' ourselves into thinking we can't do something because we're afraid. The reason we're so afraid is because of what we say to ourselves in our mind. The fear may become so overwhelming that we want to avoid the situation rather than face it. The fear, in other words, begins to affect our behavior or how we begin to act. We might start saying things to ourselves like:

- I can't do that, I'll just be a failure.
- Nobody will believe me anyway, I'm just a kid.
- I'm so scared I know I won't be able to get the words out of my mouth.

We're going to take the example of testifying in court and see if we can practice- in our mind and by the words we say to ourselves- doing a really good job on the day we come to court. We're going to learn about 'talking positively' to ourselves in order to help us be less afraid."

## SECTION V continued

**Right after lunch**

TIME:  
1 HOUR, 15 MINUTES

### OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN AGES 4 TO 7 WILL:

- Learn relaxation techniques they can use when tired or under stress.
- Learn to share positive messages about themselves and about their day at Kids' Court.

## ACTIVITY 1

### Rest and Relaxation

Very young children will show fatigue by early afternoon. A brief rest period of 10-15 minutes along with the staff allows the children to re-focus.

### MATERIALS

- Mats on the floor (4' by 2' carpet samples work well)
- A relaxation audiotape or record and cassette tape recorder or record player

### PROCESS

*Lay out the mats on the floor and, in the background, have quiet music playing.*

Good recordings include: [1] "Quiet Moments With Greg and Steve" (Daydreams) Youngheart Records, 1983, LA 90029, esp. the songs: "Magic Coin," & "Quiet Time." [2] "Tickly Toddle" by Hap Palmer, Educational Activities, Inc., 1981 [has fun intro songs for activities]. [3] "The Tickle Tune Typhoon Circle Around," 1983, Tickle Tune Typhoon Recording Co., P.O. Box 15153, Seattle WA 98115.

*Welcome the children back with warm words about their participation during the morning session. Ask them to choose a mat, sit down, rest, and listen quietly to the words and music.*

*"Welcome back! We are glad to see you again. Come on in and choose a mat. We are going to just rest for a few minutes and listen quietly."*

## ACTIVITY 2

### Building Confidence

### MATERIALS

- A reading selection that helps younger children feel good about themselves, such as *The Important Book* and *I Like Me*.\*
- Mats on the floor; one for each child

### PROCESS

*While the children are still sitting on the mats, begin . . .*

*"My name is ( ). Now that we're rested, we're going to continue by having some fun in the courtroom. You have all been such good listeners! Let's begin with a story."*

\**The Important Book* by Leonard Weisgard, Harper & Row, 1949.  
*I Like Me* by Nancy Carlson, Puffin Books, New York, NY, 1988.

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## **ACTIVITY 5**

### **Poster Drawing**

#### **MATERIALS**

- Poster paper
- Markers (or crayons, colored pencils)

#### **PROCESS**

*Have the kids draw a poster to illustrate the theme—  
"I know what to do when I come to court  
even if I'm scared."*

*Encourage them to include on their posters at least one  
positive statement.*

Facilitator may need to  
help younger ones write  
what they want to say on  
the poster.

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## **ACTIVITY 6**

### **Review**

"Today we've learned several ways to cope with feelings,  
thoughts, and behaviors we all get when we're afraid of  
something. We've learned about the three different  
channels that fear takes and how to respond:

#### **Physical Channel** (feelings in our body)

- Controlled breathing
- Thinking pleasant thoughts
- Progressive muscle relaxation

#### **Thought Channel** (what we think in our mind)

- Thought-stopping

#### **Behavior Channel** (how we act)

- Talking positively to myself

Refer to the visual aids  
again to reinforce the  
ideas and techniques  
presented in the session.

Remind them how these  
techniques can be used  
together for the best  
effect.

Now, if you'll look inside your Kids' Court packet, you'll  
find some special little dolls that I'd like to talk to you  
about. These dolls—that are inside a little box—are called  
'Worry Dolls.'" (*Refer to Appendix for an explanation of the  
use of Worry Dolls.*)

End the session with  
positive reinforcement for  
participation and the good  
work done.

"Thank you for paying close attention. Now you can  
manage your feelings better because you have several  
different skills to take care of yourself and be in charge."

## SECTION V continued

**Right after lunch**

TIME:  
1 HOUR, 15 MINUTES

### OBJECTIVES

CHILDREN AGES 4 TO 7 WILL:

- Learn relaxation techniques they can use when tired or under stress.
- Learn to share positive messages about themselves and about their day at Kids' Court.

## ACTIVITY 1

### Rest and Relaxation

Very young children will show fatigue by early afternoon. A brief rest period of 10-15 minutes along with the staff allows the children to re-focus.

### MATERIALS

- Mats on the floor (4' by 2' carpet samples work well)
- A relaxation audiotape or record and cassette tape recorder or record player

### PROCESS

*Lay out the mats on the floor and, in the background, have quiet music playing.*

Good recordings include: [1] "Quiet Moments With Greg and Steve" (Daydreams) Youngheart Records, 1983, LA 90029, esp. the songs: "Magic Coin," & "Quiet Time." [2] "Tickly Toddle" by Hap Palmer, Educational Activities, Inc., 1981 [has fun intro songs for activities]. [3] "The Tickle Tune Typhoon Circle Around," 1983, Tickle Tune Typhoon Recording Co., P.O. Box 15153, Seattle WA 98115.

*Welcome the children back with warm words about their participation during the morning session. Ask them to choose a mat, sit down, rest, and listen quietly to the words and music.*

*"Welcome back! We are glad to see you again. Come on in and choose a mat. We are going to just rest for a few minutes and listen quietly."*

## ACTIVITY 2

### Building Confidence

### MATERIALS

- A reading selection that helps younger children feel good about themselves, such as *The Important Book* and *I Like Me*.\*
- Mats on the floor; one for each child

### PROCESS

*While the children are still sitting on the mats, begin . . .*

*"My name is ( ). Now that we're rested, we're going to continue by having some fun in the courtroom. You have all been such good listeners! Let's begin with a story."*

\**The Important Book* by Leonard Weisgard, Harper & Row, 1949.  
*I Like Me* by Nancy Carlson, Puffin Books, New York, NY, 1988.

## **ACTIVITY 2**

### **Building Confidence continued**

Encourage them to share.

"This book is called *I Like Me*.

*When the reading is finished, tell each child one thing you like about him (his shoes, his big smile, etc.). Continue . . .*

"Now, I would like each of you to tell me one thing you like about yourself."

*After they speak . . .*

"Here's another wonderful story I want to share with you. It's called *The Important Book*. While I read, you can help with the story." *Encourage the children to finish the lines, such as:*

*Instructor-* The important thing about rain is that . . .

*Children-* It's wet.

*When finished with the book, have the children share one important thing about themselves. The instructor can begin with an example:*

"One important thing about me is that I like to read."

*In moving to the next activity, the instructor offers:*

"Now you are going to make your own 'important book.' Let's move over to the tables. There you will find a book with your picture on it."

## **ACTIVITY 3**

### **My Important Book**

Ask permission of the kids and their parents before taking any photos. Explain how the pictures will be used to make a book to take home. The entire book-making activity should take no more than 20 minutes.

#### **MATERIALS**

- Instant camera and film
- One pre-made book for each child with four blank pages and a cover
- Large watercolor felt-tip pens (not permanent ink) with at least one for each helper
- Seasonal or other stickers

#### **PROCESS**

*Before the session, make a blank book for each child and several extras. A photo of each child may be taken during lunch or another opportune time and glued to a book cover. Place books at the table before the kids return from lunch. As children find their place and book, remind them: "As you work, think of important things about yourself and your day at Kids' Court. Our helpers will write your ideas in your books."*

*As they're coloring, read back what each child has dictated about himself. You might write what the child found most important about Kids' Court on the book's last page.*

**Special Project: A Poster for the Judge.** You may want to take a few informal instant photos of the children at work. These can be arranged on a poster on which the kids have drawn pictures and placed stickers. The poster can be presented to the Judge, or other staff member, at the end of the day as a "thank you."

## **ACTIVITY 4**

### **Relaxation Skills**

When the books are finished, have the children sit on their mats again.

The tape then leads the kids on a short journey to a faraway place they've chosen (Disneyland, the beach, etc.). The tape or teacher guides them through relaxing from their toes up through their shoulders as they imagine themselves at their favorite place while the music plays.

### **MATERIALS**

- Mat for each child
- Relaxation audio tape, (example *Quiet Moments*) or make up your own using quiet background music
- Shiny pennies or a small toy to hold and keep

### **PROCESS**

"You have worked hard this afternoon. Now we want to give you some ideas about how to relax, especially when you're tired or nervous or afraid.

Sit or lay on your mat. Think of a favorite place where you had fun, or where you can be calm and happy. Here is a magic penny (*or toy*). It will take you to an imaginary place where you can relax when you are worried. Follow the directions on this tape, but try not to talk, OK? Ready, close your eyes. Here we go:—one— two—three!

*For example:*

"Listen and relax your toes and feet. Where are you? At a beach, under a tree. Now stretch your legs. Is it quiet where you are."

*When it's time to return (in three or four minutes), say:*  
"Now squeeze your magic penny again. It will take you back to Kids's Court. One—two—three.

Welcome back! You look so relaxed. Now you have learned to close your eyes and travel to your own special place to relax for a few minutes when you are scared or nervous."

*The kids may want to share briefly their thoughts at this point.*

## SECTION VI

### ***Final Event of the Day***

TIME: 15 MINUTES

### **OBJECTIVES**

PARENTS/GUARDIANS AND CHILDREN WILL:

- Celebrate their accomplishments for having successfully completed the Kids' Court program.

Parents rejoin children for the graduation ceremony.

The children remain seated together while adults rejoin the group in the courtroom.

### **MATERIALS**

- Graduation certificates
- Teddy bears or a special memento
- Pictures of judge with each child

### **PROCESS**

*The facilitator welcomes the parents back for the graduation ceremony.*

*He or she summarizes the day with positive statements about what was learned, the cooperation of the children, some examples of the children's work, and other comments that seem an appropriate expression of appreciation.*

*The judge then presents a graduation certificate to each child, who then walks to the front to receive it.*

- *The child is directed to a staff member who offers "congratulations" and a teddy bear or other memento.*
- *The child then rejoins his or her parents or guardians.*

*Children may be given a balloon to take with them as the day ends. If the photo with the judge has just been taken, children may need to wait briefly while it develops.*

*Close the day with a final "Thank you!"*

The judge stands to give out the certificates.

An instant photo of the child and judge may be taken at this time if no pictures were taken of the child and judge together earlier in the day.

Each child receives a teddy bear or a small memento for participating in Kids' Court. These items may be donated by local merchants, police officers, or other service organizations. This is meant to serve as a comforting reminder of the day and can later be brought to court.





**KING COUNTY  
KIDS' COURT**

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**PARENT/  
GUARDIAN  
CURRICULUM**

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KING COUNTY KIDS' COURT

## *Parent/Guardian Agenda*

### **MORNING SESSION**

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**Section I: INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITIES (all children, parents/guardians together)**

- |               |            |  |
|---------------|------------|--|
| 9:30 - 9:45   | Activity 1 | Registration                             |
| 9:45 - 10:00  | Activity 2 | Warm-up Activity - Observe               |
| 10:00 - 10:15 | Activity 3 | Welcoming Remarks/Introductions          |
| 10:15 - 10:30 | Activity 4 | Addressing Children's Feelings - Observe |

**Section II: UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM**

- |               |            |                                    |
|---------------|------------|------------------------------------|
| 10:30 - 11:45 | Activity 1 | Introductions and Orientation      |
|               | Activity 2 | Overview of the Legal System       |
|               | Activity 3 | Affirming My Child's Participation |

**Section III: VIDEO OF THE COURT PROCESS (all children and parents/guardians)**

- |               |            |  |
|---------------|------------|--|
| 11:45 - 12:00 | Activity 1 | A Children's Video: <i>Taking The Stand</i>                          |
| 12:00 - 12:30 |            | <i>Lunch</i> (served by volunteers to children and parents together) |

### **AFTERNOON SESSION**

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**Section IV: "TAKING CARE OF ME"**

- |              |            |   |
|--------------|------------|---|
| 12:30 - 1:35 | Activity 1 | Explanation of Stress                   |
|              | Activity 2 | Diaphragmatic (deep, relaxed) Breathing |
|              | Activity 3 | Progressive Relaxation                  |

**Section V: PROGRAM EVALUATION**

- |             |            |   |
|-------------|------------|---|
| 1:35 - 1:45 | Activity 1 | Complete a Questionnaire<br>(See example in Appendix) |
|-------------|------------|---|

**Section VI: GRADUATION (all children and parents/guardians together)**

- |             |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|
| 1:45 - 2:00 |  |  |
|-------------|--|--|

# UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM

## SECTION II

This portion of Kids' Court is devoted to helping parents and guardians cope with their situation and the upcoming trial. It is held during the morning while the Judge and Prosecutor talk to the children.

TIME:  
1 HOUR, 15 MINUTES

### OBJECTIVES

#### PARENTS/GUARDIANS WILL:

- Have an opportunity to voice their concerns about the court process.
- Understand clearly the role of the judge and the prosecutor, as well as others who work in the courtroom during a trial.
- Learn about referral resources in the County.
- Learn techniques to help manage the anxieties associated with their child's court appearance.

## ACTIVITY 1

### Introductions and Orientation

The lead children's facilitator for the day joins the parent's group to provide an overview of the children's session (if possible).

The children's facilitator may refer to the two sections "Judge Talks to Kids" (pages 16-19) and "Who's Who in the Courtroom" (pages 20-25) for specifics to summarize.

### MATERIALS

- Chalkboard (or white board, flipchart and paper)
- A copy of the Parent's Packet for each family

### PROCESS

*The following script can guide the facilitator/leader for the parent's group. Adapt the wording to suit your local community's needs. Two facilitators may be used to draw expertise from more than one source.*

"Welcome to this special portion of Kids' Court. To begin, let me introduce myself. I am ( name ).

I'm sure you're interested in what your children will be doing in their sessions. The children's facilitator (name), is here now to give you a brief overview of what your kids will be doing today."

*The children's facilitator briefly reviews the morning and afternoon sessions, answering questions as appropriate.*

"Included in your packet is a handout entitled *Questions for the Prosecutor*. Please take a moment to write down any questions you have about your specific case that you would like the prosecutor to respond to. We'll collect these before lunch and make sure the appropriate prosecutor gets them."

## UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM

"Also, if you are not already working with a Victim Advocate and would like to, note that at the bottom of the page.

We ask today that two rules be followed to protect the integrity of your individual cases as well as to respect the confidentiality of families involved. The rules are:

- 1) Please do not bring up *specific aspects* of your case today. Questions about the specifics of your case should be directed to your own prosecutor and discussed privately.
- 2) Please do not discuss the names of families or children in attendance here today *outside* this setting.

Thanks for your cooperation. Do you have any questions before we proceed?

As parents introduce themselves, they hear others speak and realize they're not the only ones going through what they're feeling. You may want to write on a flipchart some of their expectations or questions.

Proceed around the group and solicit responses from each participant.

In order to get to know each other better, I'd like to invite each of you to introduce yourself. I'll ask you to please tell us your first name and the reason you are at Kids' Court today. I'd also appreciate knowing two other things: what you hope to gain from this Kids' Court session, and any questions you'd like to ask about the court process.

Thank you for sharing your concerns. I hear a similar theme being repeated. You are concerned about the well-being and safety of your children."

*Acknowledge any other common concerns you hear expressed.*

Hold up the individual booklets and handouts as you show participants what's contained in the packets.

"Let's look now at the packet of materials you received when you arrived. You'll find several booklets, pamphlets, and handouts in the packet." (*See the Appendix for recommended materials*)

"Each item provides information on the issues relevant to many of you here today. You'll find information on child sexual abuse, sexual assault laws, how to help your child, and a list of community resources to follow up with for further assistance."

## UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM

### ACTIVITY 2

#### Overview of the Legal System

Describe and explain as much of the following outline as seems necessary. Terminology and procedures may differ among communities. Be prepared to modify this information to suit your situation.

### MATERIALS

- Conference Table and Chairs
- Training Manual
- Note cards
- Parent's Packet
- Chalkboard (white board or flipchart)

### PROCESS

"The process of going to court in King County (substitute your jurisdiction) seems overwhelming and intimidating to many who encounter it for the first time. Our goal this morning is to review this process so that you have at least a basic understanding of our system.

Let's begin at the beginning. Each of you is here today because the prosecutor has filed charges against someone for breaking a law. In most cases, a child you parent has been an alleged victim of a crime. This child witness may be the prosecutor's main witness. The prosecutor is the attorney for the state who represents the community's interests and will work to bring charges and convict individuals who have committed crimes. Most of you have been involved in a preliminary investigation which probably included talking to a police officer, a detective, and finally a prosecutor. Each of you has a trial pending. Let's look now at what's involved in 'going to trial.'"

### JOINT INTERVIEW

- Purpose: to hear the alleged victim's account of the problem and to clarify legal issues for the investigator and the prosecutor. The witness is asked to review details of the crime.
- Present are the alleged victim, the prosecutor, the assigned detective, and a victim advocate, if requested.
- The expected outcome is a decision on whether or not to file charges and whether a trial may occur. In the interview, the prosecutor evaluates the strength of the case by considering the supporting evidence, capability of the witness, and availability of other witnesses.
- If charges are not filed, you have a right to know the reasons and you should discuss this with the prosecutor.

## UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM

### Overview of the Legal System continued

#### DEFENSE INTERVIEW

- **Purpose:** to allow the attorney representing the alleged perpetrator of a crime the opportunity, before a trial is held, to question the alleged victim.
- Present are the alleged victim, the defense attorney, the prosecutor, and a victim advocate, if requested.
- The interview is informal and is not a sworn deposition or testimony under oath. The defense attorney will have an investigator present to take notes. Some attorneys may ask to tape record or video tape the interview. It is the victim's right to refuse to consent to the taping of the interview. The prosecutor will be present to ensure the fairness of the questions.
- Victims cannot refuse to participate in the defense interview. The court can order a sworn deposition if the victim does not willingly participate, and it can even dismiss the case. The victim/family have the right to choose a reasonable time and to request an advocate be present with the child.
- The defense attorney may also want to talk to the parent or guardian about the case. You have the right to have the prosecuting attorney present during the interview.

#### HEARINGS BEFORE THE TRIAL

- **Bail Hearing.** A bail hearing is held within several days of the arrest of the suspect. The decision is made whether to set bail (monetary amount), keep the suspect in custody, or allow the suspect to be free on personal recognizance.
- **Arraignment.** The suspect is informed of the charges being filed and of his or her constitutional rights. The suspect is allowed to plead guilty or not guilty. If the plea is not guilty, a trial date is set.
- **Omnibus Hearing.** At the next court date one of three things will happen: the defendant pleads guilty, the defendant takes a trial date, or the Omnibus Hearing is continued for two weeks. Trial dates are often only approximations of the actual date for trial.

## UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM

### Overview of the Legal System continued

The actual trial will occur when both defense counsel and the deputy prosecutor have finished trials with earlier speedy trial dates and when there is a courtroom available.

- **Plea Negotiations.** At any time up to trial, negotiations may occur regarding settlement of the case. The prosecutor will never enter into any agreement with the defense without consulting the victim's family. Plea negotiations often include a promise by the prosecutor to recommend that the judge impose a particular sentence for the defendant. This agreement does not affect the absolute right of the victim to be heard at sentencing.

### GUILTY PLEA

- **Definition:** defendant admits to the charges filed or may admit to a negotiated lesser charge. If so, a trial is eliminated.
- **Acceptance or rejection of a plea is made by the prosecutor with input from the family.**
- **Pros and cons of accepting or rejecting a plea:**
  - The child will not have to testify in a trial.
  - The plea ensures a guaranteed outcome as opposed to the uncertainty of a trial, and the defendant gives up the right to appeal a finding of guilt.
  - The defendant admits guilt, which may be important to the child/family.
  - The family may want a trial to "tell their story."
- **Alford Plea:** the defendant pleads guilty without admitting guilt because she or he feels that the outcome of the trial would be a guilty verdict.

### THE TRIAL

- **Purpose:** a legal proceeding to decide if there are enough facts to prove that someone broke the law. The "facts" are on trial, not the child.
- **Bench trial** (heard only before the judge) vs. jury trial. The defendant has the right to decide between them.
- **Review timeliness at this point.** Discuss the system and the frequent delays that occur from the time of the incident to the actual trial date.

## UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM

### Overview of the Legal System continued

#### COURTROOM SETTING

- Review personnel present during a trial. Include: Judge, Prosecutor, Defense Attorney, Bailiff, Defendant, Witness, Court Reporter, Court Clerk, Jury, Advocates, Visitors, Sheriff or Law Enforcement Officer.
- The presence of the defendant during a trial:  
Tips to help the child witness deal with this. E.g., not looking at the defendant, carrying a special stuffed animal, attending a Kids' Court relaxation session, etc.
- Witnesses are excluded from the courtroom, but the child can identify support people to be present while he or she is testifying (advocate, relative, etc.)

#### SUBPOENA

- Purpose: a court order to appear and give testimony. Subpoenas cannot be ignored. Witnesses who fail to appear are subject to arrest.
- Subpoenas specify when and where a trial is scheduled to be held and inform prospective witnesses (children included) when to appear.

#### JURY SELECTION

- Purpose: to retain an impartial group of citizens who will hear testimony and make decisions regarding the guilt or innocence of the alleged perpetrator.

#### TESTIMONY OF WITNESSES

- Purpose: the process of hearing a series of witnesses called by either the prosecutor or the defense attorney. These witnesses speak to the allegations on which the trial is based. All statements made in front of the jury are overseen by the judge to ensure proper procedures and that the law is being upheld.
- Types of witnesses:
  - Victim witness role*- to tell what happened, answer questions as well as possible, and to tell the truth.
  - Defendant*- may or may not testify. If he chooses not to, the jury is instructed not to hold that against him.
  - Others*- expert witnesses, witnesses to facts of the trial.
- Exclusion of witnesses from the courtroom: the rationale is to prevent witnesses from being influenced by other testimony being presented. Witnesses wait outside the courtroom before testifying. If there is concern about harassment from the defendant's supporters, the witness may request to wait in another location. Some witnesses



## UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM

### Overview of the Legal System continued

prefer to see the defendant enter and leave the courtroom as it helps them prepare mentally for appearing in the courtroom.

#### ■ Types of testimony:

*Direct examination*- the prosecutor asks questions so the witness can tell what happened in a clear, logical fashion.

*Cross examination*- the defense attorney asks questions. These may be "tough" and more "detail oriented."

Attempts may be made to confuse the witness.

*Redirect*- prosecutor may ask more questions to help clarify something left up in the air or confusing.

*Objections*- the process of legal arguing.

*Overruled*- witness should answer the question.

*Sustained*- witness should not answer. The judge will explain to the child what to do.

### PREPARATION FOR A VERDICT

- The "burden of proof" means it is the responsibility of the prosecutor to present to the jury enough evidence so that they believe "beyond a reasonable doubt" that the defendant committed the crime and they can find him or her guilty.

#### ■ Concerning trials and verdicts, emphasize that:

- The child needs to feel she/he did the best that could be done and is believed no matter what the trial's outcome.
- The child's testimony is not the only information on which the verdict rests. Other statements made during the trial are also considered.
- Even if the defendant is acquitted, he has been held to some accountability in the trial process.
- The fact that charges were brought and a trial was held reflects belief and support of the child by the investigative process.
- Whether or not the defendant is convicted, positive benefits may result. E.g., being able to confront the defendant, being heard by judge and jury, etc.

### ACQUITTAL-NOT GUILTY

- Definition: jury decides there was not enough evidence presented to "prove beyond a reasonable doubt" that the defendant broke the law.
- It does not mean the defendant didn't commit the crime, or that he is innocent. It means "not guilty."
- It does not mean the jury did not believe the child witness.
- Outcome: the trial is over, and the case remains on the record with law enforcement.

## UNDERSTANDING THE COURT SYSTEM

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### Overview of the Legal System continued

#### HUNG JURY

- Definition: jury members can not *all* come to agreement that the prosecutor had proven the guilt of the defendant.
- Outcome: the trial is over. The case must be dismissed, plead, or retried. The prosecutor will make this decision but will seek the opinion of the family involved.

#### CONVICTION

- Definition: all jurors agree that the prosecutor has proven the defendant's guilt "beyond a reasonable doubt."
- Outcome: the trial is over, and a sentencing date will be set. The defendant has the right to appeal any legal rulings made by the court.

#### OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER IN SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

- Respect your child's privacy. She or he may or may not tell you any details. Don't question the child, but offer your love and support. If your child wants to talk about it, be available to listen.
- Also, to respect your child's privacy, don't tell people about the abuse unnecessarily.
- Take care of yourself and have support for yourself through an advocate or trusted friend. Take time on the phone or in person (out of earshot of the child) to discuss your feelings and concerns with this person.
- Find a counselor, if needed, who will help your child sort through the abuse. (*The Parent Packet includes a list of community resources.*)
- Encourage your child to use the relaxation techniques learned and practice these yourself to help reduce stress.

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### ACTIVITY 3

#### Affirming My Child's Participation

"Before we rejoin the children, we'd like to invite you to do something special for your child. In your folder is a note card. Use this to create what we call an Affirmation Card. You can write anything you want to say to your child."\*

\*Note how much you love the child and how well you know she or he will do in court.

## SECTION IV

### **Following Lunch for Adults**

TIME:  
1 HOUR, 5 MINUTES

#### **OBJECTIVES**

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS WILL:

- Understand and manage their stress and anxieties.
- Learn tools and techniques for handling and reducing the effects of stress.

### **ACTIVITY 1**

#### **Explanation of Stress**

This section is best led by a specialist: someone experienced in teaching adults stress management, biofeedback, or relaxation exercises.

The material in the prior section (especially pages 27-34 for older children) can also be adapted and used with adults.

Ask for a show of hands for each symptom.

#### **MATERIALS**

- Cassette audio tape with a progressive relaxation exercise on side one and calming music or sounds on side two
- Handout describing relaxation training (See the Appendix)

#### **PROCESS**

*Instructor will provide explanations and lead discussion. What follows is a sample presentation.*

"Hello, my name is ( *name* ), and I'm a ( *position* ). Let's begin by taking a look at something we all experience: stress. Just what is stress?

Stress is the wear and tear on our bodies caused by the demands of life; we call these demands stressors. Stressful events cause our bodies to produce strong emotions such as anxiety, apprehension, frustration, fear, or anger. These emotions produce physical responses such as muscle tension, faster heart rate, cold sweaty hands, rapid breathing. These responses are controlled by the sympathetic nervous system that prepares our body to meet emergencies with 'fight or flight' reactions.

When we're put under stress repeatedly, these physical responses can become overactive and can lead to pain or disease. We can become less and less able to handle even the minor stressors.

How many of you are experiencing more headaches? Cold hands? Upset or nervous stomach? Poor sleep and concentration? Frequent crying for no apparent reason?"

"These are some of the symptoms of bodies experiencing difficulty in relaxing. Research on controlling stress shows that these symptoms can decrease when we practice relaxation techniques.

Relaxation techniques can be learned. We can develop the skill of handling and reducing the effects of stress on our bodies. Let's learn some of the tools and techniques for reducing stress now."

### ACTIVITY 2

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#### **Diaphragmatic (deep, relaxed) Breathing**

To the right is an easy-to-understand explanation of the mechanics of breathing.

#### **PROCESS**

"Deep, relaxed breathing comes from what is called diaphragmatic breathing. This type of breathing can have a quick, calming effect on your body and bring about a general feeling of relaxation.

Breathing, as you remember, pulls oxygen into our body and pumps carbon dioxide, a waste product, out. Our brain controls breathing automatically, and adjusts the breath's size and frequency to signals from sensors in the lungs.

The lungs themselves have no muscles for breathing. The diaphragm, a dome-shaped muscle at the floor of the lungs, causes breath to be drawn in and out. The diaphragm stretches from the backbone to the front of the rib cage and separates the chest cavity from the abdominal cavity.

When we breathe in, the diaphragm flattens downward creating more space in the chest cavity for the lungs to fill. When we breathe out, the diaphragm relaxes and lifts back to its domed shape. Although we breathe automatically, we can take conscious control of the breathing process.

Here are the steps for deep, relaxed breathing:

1. Loosen tight clothing especially around the neck and waist (abdominal area).
2. Sit relaxed, feet apart comfortably, and rest one hand easily on your stomach over the navel, the other hand on your upper chest.
3. Inhale through your nose (the nose warms and filters the air), exhale through your mouth (if your nose is stuffy, inhale and exhale through your mouth).
4. Concentrate on your breathing and become aware of which hand is rising and falling with each breath.
5. Gently exhale most of the air in your lungs."

6. As you inhale gently, gradually extend your abdomen causing it to rise and move outward about an inch. You should feel the movement with your hand. Note: do **not** lift your shoulders or chest as you inhale. As you breathe in, imagine the warmed relaxing air flow in warming all parts of your body.
7. Pause one second after inhaling.
8. Exhale slowly. Your abdomen will slowly pull in as the diaphragm relaxes upward against your lungs.
9. Pause one second after exhaling.
10. Repeat the slow inhaling- pause- exhale- pause five to ten times. Take your time, breathing so the air goes into your lower lungs. Practice makes it easier. Concentrate on slow, even, unforced breathing.

Allow one to two minutes for practice.

Any time you feel tense (physically or emotionally), try this relaxed, deep breathing. Frequent practice will allow you to develop the skill necessary to regain a more relaxed state when you feel the need."

### ACTIVITY 3

#### Progressive Relaxation

Play a quiet-mood tape of music or sounds of nature.

Deliver this section with a slow, easy pace, interspersed with gentle reminders to breathe.

#### PROCESS

"Another excellent stress-reduction technique which can provide the entire body with deep relaxation is called progressive relaxation. Progressive relaxation allows you to compare the feeling of tensed muscles with the feeling of relaxed muscles. Let's try it.

1. Get comfortable in your chair.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Take three slow, relaxed diaphragmatic breaths.
4. Tense your right fist by squeezing it- hold the tension, study it, and then relax your fist. Let go of the tension, let your hand feel heavy and relaxed.
5. Tense your left fist. (*Continue with similar directions for each muscle group as you described in No. 4.*)  
*Continue with instructions to tense and relax the following muscle groups in order:*
6. Both fists
7. Biceps
8. Triceps
9. Forehead by wrinkling up
10. Forehead by frowning"

**Instructor should be familiar with the tape in order to lead this exercise.**

11. Eyes
12. Jaw
13. Tongue
14. Neck muscles by pressing back, then forward
15. Shoulders
16. Take a deep breath and relax chest walls
17. Tense stomach muscles by pushing out
18. Tense stomach muscles by pulling in
19. Tense lower back by arching
20. Tense buttocks by pressing down with heels

**Allow a minute or so to readjust to the surroundings.**

**Encourage participants to describe what they're feeling.**

Like relaxed breathing, progressive relaxation must be practiced often and in a variety of settings to be effective. However, you should already be experiencing some physical changes. Would any of you mind sharing how you are feeling right now after participating in these exercises?

You will receive a copy of these exercises recorded on a cassette tape to take home with you. The back side of the tape contains the sounds you've heard. Use the tape to practice reducing tension.

Your child will be getting a similar tape with images such as squeezing a lemon and letting it drop for tensing the fist. You may want to practice the breathing and relaxation techniques along with your child every day.

Do any of you have any final questions?

Remember, your ability to relax quickly in any situation gives you self-control and the power to decide how you want to handle any stressful situation. When you are able to stay calm, relaxed, and in control, you have an opportunity to change stressful situations into more positive experiences.

Thank you."

## SECTION V

TIME:  
10 MINUTES

### OBJECTIVES

PARENTS AND GUARDIANS WILL:

- Provide feedback about the helpfulness of the program, the activities involved, and the overall quality of King County Kids' Court.
- Offer suggestions for future Kids' Court sessions.

### THE ACTIVITY

#### Complete a Questionnaire

Encourage participants to answer honestly and to provide any suggestions that might make future Kids' Court sessions more beneficial.

#### MATERIALS

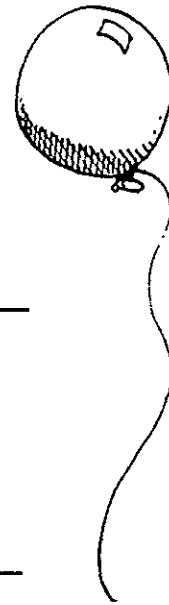
- The Questionnaire (See example in Appendix)

#### PROCESS

*Participants are asked to spend a few moments completing a standard evaluation form.*



# **KING COUNTY KIDS' COURT**



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## **APPENDIX**

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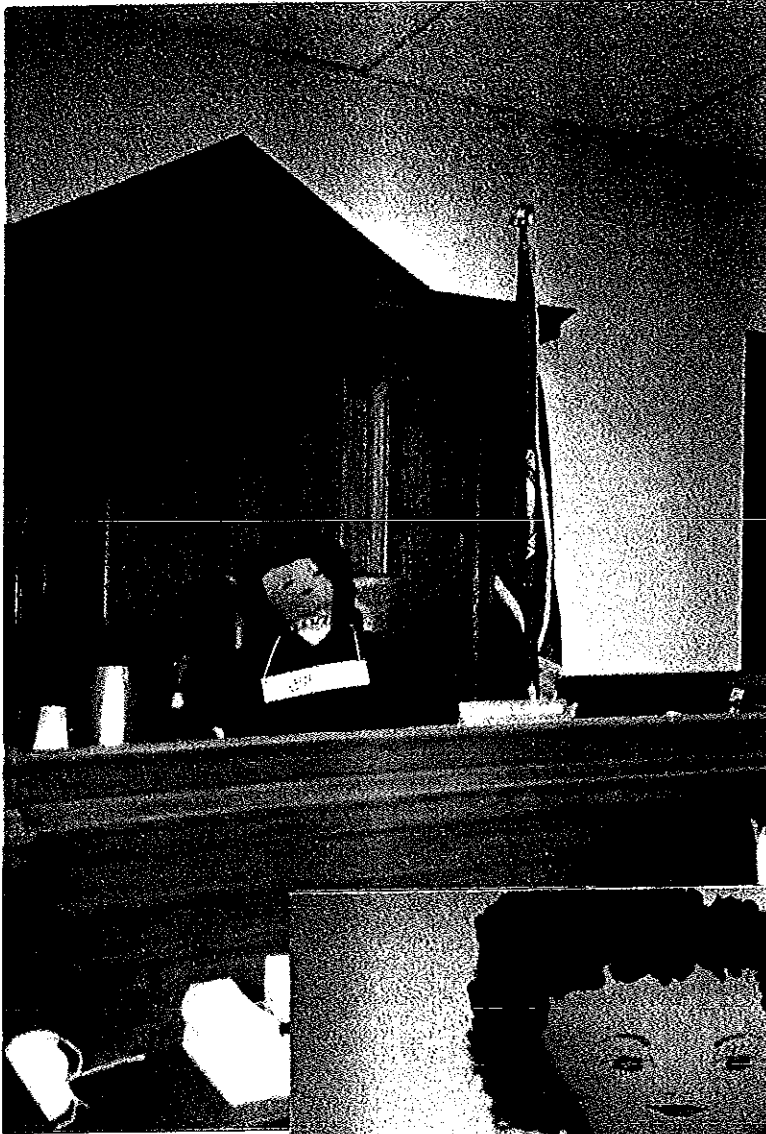


## FOLLOW THE FOOTPRINTS TO KIDS' COURT

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## LIFE SIZE DOLLS DEPICT COURT PERSONNEL

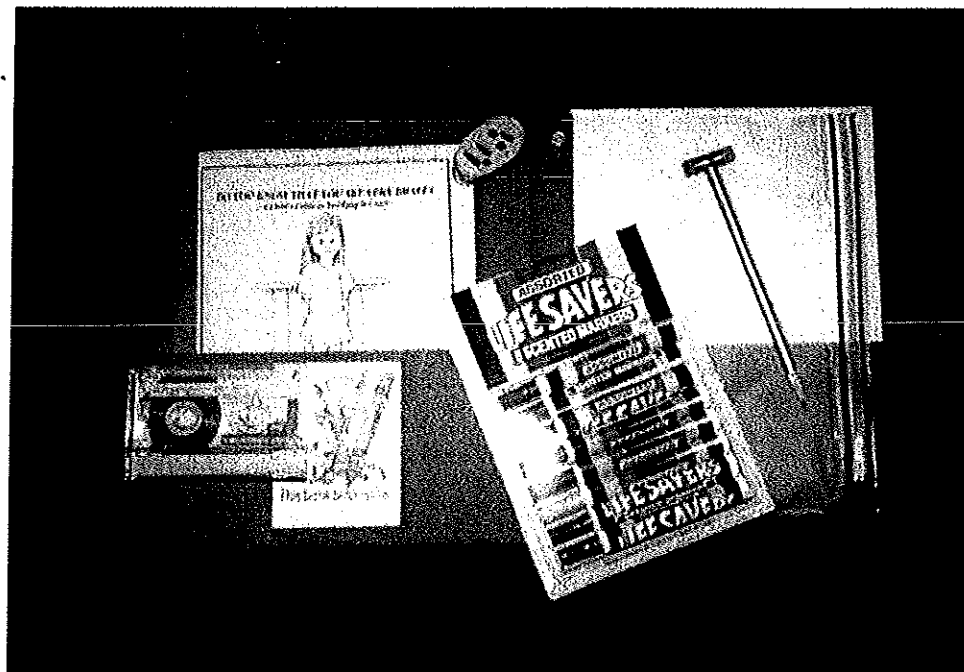
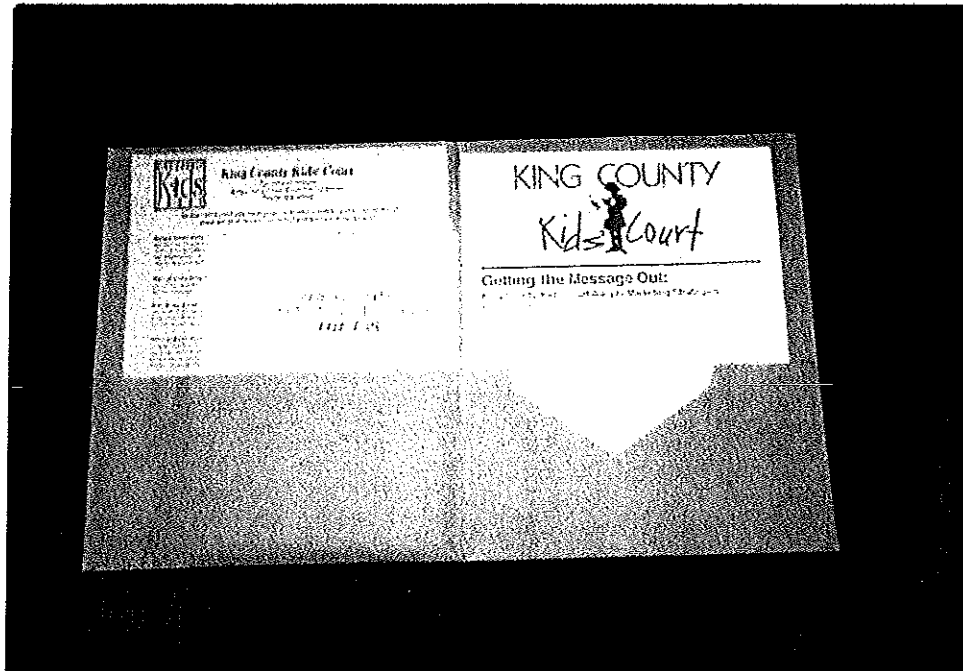


JUDGE



ADVOCATE AND CHILD WITNESS

## PARENT AND CHILDREN PACKETS



# **Court School Programs**

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King County Kids' Court  
Special Assault Unit  
Office of the Prosecuting Attorney  
3020 Issaquah Pine Lake S.E. Suite 514  
Issaquah, Washington 98027  
Donna Belin, Executive Director  
(206) 386-KIDS

## **Other Programs**

Kids In Court  
Children's Hospital  
San Diego, California  
Barbara Ryan  
(619) 576-4011

London Family Court Clinic, Inc.  
London, Ontario  
Dr. Louise Sas  
(519) 679-7250

The Philadelphia Court School Project  
District Attorney's Office  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Mary Achilles, Director of Victim Services  
(215) 686-8933

Court School  
Snohomish County Prosecutor's Office  
Snohomish, Washington  
Bill France, MSW  
(206) 388-3461

Georgia Center for Children  
Decatur, Georgia  
Nancy Copelan-Aldridge  
(404) 377-9768

## Books and Videos on Preparing for Court

### *Carla Goes to Court*

Jo Beaudry and Lynne Ketchum  
Human Sciences Press  
72 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10011

### *Chris Tells The Truth*

Dr. Kent Caruso and Richard J. Pulcini  
Northwest Psychological Publishers, Inc.  
P.O. Box 494958  
Redding, CA 96049-4958

### *Do You Know You Are Very Brave?*

### *A Child's Guide To Testifying In Court*

Linda Fetui  
King County Kids' Court  
3020 Issaquah Pine Lake S.E. Suite 514  
Issaquah, WA 98027  
(206) 386-KIDS

### *Getting Ready For Court*

Lynn M. Copen and Linda M. Pucci  
KIDS KOURT, Inc.  
1725 50th St.  
Kenosha, WI 53140  
(800) 383-0188

### *Going to Court*

(A Coloring and Activity Book)

Channing L. Bete Co., Inc.  
200 State Road  
South, Deerfield, MA 01373-0200  
(800) 628-7733

### *Kids Court and Kourt People*

(Therapeutic and educational courtroom model)

KIDS KOURT, Inc.  
1725 50th St.  
Kenosha, WI 53140  
(800) 383-0188

### *Kids Go To Court, Too, What You Will See And Do*

Jill Ruzicka, Sexual Assault Services,  
Hennepin County Attorney's Office,  
Hennepin County Public Affairs  
Department. Distributed by

Kids Rights  
3700 Progress Blvd.  
Mount Dora, FL 32757  
(800) 892-KIDS (904) 483-1100

### *My Court Notebook*

Carolyn Simpson Morris and Terri Jowers  
Willis

Kershaw County Assault Center/  
Children's Advocacy Center  
P.O. Box 282  
Camden, SC 29020  
(803) 425-4357

### *My Day At The Courthouse*

Nan Chamberlin  
Trials & Smiles  
P.O. Box 141  
West Linn, OR 97068

### *Projective Storytelling Cards—Court Preparation Set*

Northwest Psychological Publishers, Inc.  
P.O. Box 494958  
Redding, CA 96049-4958

### *So You Have To Go To Court! A Child's Guide To Testifying As A Witness in Child Abuse Cases*

Wendy L. Harvey and Anne Watson-Russell  
Butterworths  
2265 Midland Avenue  
Scarborough, Ontario M1P 4S1  
(416) 292-1421

*Continued—*

# Books and Videos on Preparing for Court

*Continued—*

## *Step By Step: Preparing For Court*

Haven Books  
P.O. Box 787  
Pontiac, MI 48056

## *The ABC's of Family Court: A Children's Guide*

Kathleen Alberton  
CITYBOOK  
City Publishing Center  
2223 F Municipal Bldg.  
New York, NY 10007  
(212) 669-8243

## *To Tell The Truth*

Brien K. Ogawa, Debbie Gollehan-Smith,  
and Alexandra A. Rejzer  
Victim/Witness Assistance Program  
Department of Prosecuting Attorney  
200 South High Street  
Walluku, Maui, Hawaii 96793

## *Your Day in Court*

Judy Wilford  
Court Network  
Victorian Court Information and  
Welfare Network, Inc.  
241 William Street  
Melbourne, 3000, Victoria,  
Australia  
(03) 6706977

## *Videotapes*

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### *Taking The Stand*

Victim Witness Assistance Program  
Suite 101, County Courthouse Annex  
Greenville, SC 29601  
(803) ~~298~~-8612

467-8612

### *KIDS IN COURT:*

#### *A Program for Child Witnesses*

The Center For Child Protection  
Children's Hospital and Health Center  
8001 Frost Street  
San Diego, CA 92123  
(619) 576-5803

*This is not an all-inclusive listing of such books. In addition, this list does not represent endorsement of these publications or materials by King County Kids' Court or staff involved with the project.*

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- When the Victim is a Child—Issues for Judges and Prosecutors*, Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 20402, Stock #027-000-01248-5.
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